**There’s a Place for Everyone in Philadelphia**

**By: Ryann Carroll**

When Philadelphia was first founded by William Penn in October of 1682, he had big dreams for his city. He chose the site for Philadelphia very strategically. If you look at any major city, they are situated near a major waterway that gives them access to the oceans. This made trading much easier and as a result the cities would prosper. So Penn placed Philadelphia in between the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, “in the most convenient place upon the river for health & Navigation”1.

Penn was a Quaker and those beliefs and practices shined through in his plans for Philadelphia. Quakers were very peaceful people they strongly believed that “every person is loved and guided by God”2. This included even women and blacks. Penn envisioned “…a place where people of differing languages and customs could live together, where men and women could worship as they pleased, where free men could participate fully in their government.”3 The name “Philadelphia” is derived from Greek meaning “Brotherly love”. This ideology would appeal too many looking to settle in the New World and would play a major role in attracting settlers.

Penn’s original layout of the city was not nearly as large as Philadelphia is today. As more people immigrated and settled the land, they started too moved into the outskirts of the city. Although these lands were not part of the city of Philadelphia they were a part of the Philadelphia County. After the Act of Consolidation of 18544 was put into effect, all of these outlying districts and boroughs became a part of the City of Philadelphia. Today, the 143 square mile5 city can be broken up into ten major sections; Center City, South Philadelphia, Southwest Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, Northwest Philadelphia, North Philadelphia, Northeast Philadelphia, and Bridesburg, Kensington, and Richmond. These major sections can be broken down even further into smaller neighborhoods. Through interviews with locals as well as some through research a pattern was detected in how the neighborhoods were settled.

Mrs. Dolores Carroll is a Philadelphia native who has resided in Mayfair, a neighborhood in the Northeast section of the city, since 1954. She said that she and her husband originally moved to Mayfair because, “Daddy [her late husband] worked at the paper mill up on the boulevard and at Sylvan Seal Milk.” During the interview with Mrs. Carroll, several commonalities amongst the residents surfaced. She had mentioned that many of men that lived in the area were police officers and firemen (her husband also became a police officer later as well). Mayfair is a working class neighborhood made up of working class families that all live in relatively identical row homes. This factor along with common job types puts all the residents in close socio-economic standing. Also Mayfair was mostly populated by “white, Irish-American, Roman Catholics.” So far, Mrs. Carroll demonstrated that religion, cultural descent, jobs and socio-economic status were all factors that shaped her neighborhood.

Analysis of other sources such as *William Penn and the founding of Pennsylvania: a documentary history3* written by Jean Souderlandand *Immigrant America: a portrait6* written by Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut suggests that many other neighborhoods in Philadelphia are formed by similar patterns.

Souderland in her book stated how William Penn was a Quaker and many Quakers settled Pennsylvania for that reason. In addition, Mrs. Carroll said that the majority of Mayfair was Roman Catholics. These examples support the idea that religion may be an influential factor in the development of neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

America is often referred to as the “melting pot” because of all different cultured people that settled the land, many descendants of western Europeans. Philadelphia has a very large German, Italian, Irish and Polish population however when looking at city demographics and patterns, it seems that they settle in areas according to similar culture/ ethnic backgrounds. Mrs. Carroll mentioned that most citizens of Mayfair were of Irish descent. She also revealed other popular patterns such as this around the city; South Philadelphia was mostly Italians and Bridesburg, Kensington, and Richmond sections were mostly Polish. Portes and Rumbaut support this idea in their book because they state “The settlement decisions of contemporary immigrants are decisively affected by the ethnic concentrations established by their compatriots in the past.”

Another topic of discussion in the book *Immigrant America: a portrait6* was how all over America, job types affected where new immigrants settled. For example many descendants of Finland had experience with copper- mining and timber from their home country and therefore settled in areas in the mid-west where those types of jobs were available. Another example included how many Irish and Italian immigrants stayed along the east coast because it had the most opportunity for jobs with canal companies. This is consistent with Mrs. Carroll sharing that many of the men that lived in Mayfair were police officers and firemen. If people have similar jobs (therefore have similar incomes) and live within the same neighborhoods (therefore similar expenses) then it can be concluded that they have comparable socio-economic statuses.

Based on the substantial evidence gathered, it seems that religion, culture, socio-economic status and job type are all significant factors that affect the way areas are settled, in this case how neighborhoods in Philadelphia developed. This implies everyone is able to find a place in this city that best suits them. Religion, culture, socio-economic status, and job type are all general factors. More precise fits can be determined when considering preferred means of travel, favored past-times, types of cuisine you enjoy, etc. Your experience in Philadelphia is very personal but finding an area best suited for you is practically guaranteed!

Works Cited

1. Forrest, Tuomi J. "William Plans the City." *William Penn*. unknown, unknown. Web. 29 Nov 2011. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/penn/pnhome.html>.

2. unknown , . "FAQs about Quakers." *FGC Friends* . FGC Friends. Web. 28 Apr 2013. <http://www.fgcquaker.org/explore/faqs-about-quakers

3. Soderlund, Jean. *William Penn and the founding of Pennsylvania: a documentary history*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983. eBook. <http://books.google.com/books?id=RP- IRN8PDnUC&printsec=frontcover&dq=william penn and the founding of pennsylvania&hl=en&ei=iYTVTuPFD8H00gHR0MH2AQ&sa=X&oi=book\_res ult&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDYQ6AEwAA

4. unknown, . "Act of Consolidation, 1854." *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia, 16 November 2011. Web. 4 Dec 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Act\_of\_Consolidation,\_1854>.

5. unknown , . "Philadelphia." *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia, 19 Apr 2013. Web. 28 Apr 2013. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia>.

6. Portes, Alejandro, and Rubén G. Rumbaut. *Immigrant America: a portrait*. 3rd. University of California Press, 2006. eBook. <http://books.google.com/books?id=jNtXaPn9oDUC&pg=PA38&dq=what types of immigrants settled in Philadelphia&hl=en&ei=uDbcTqj3D- b30gGgp\_WADg&sa=X&oi=book\_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CEsQ6A EwAw